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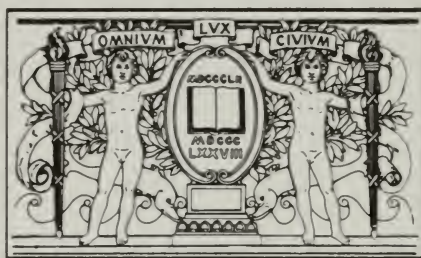
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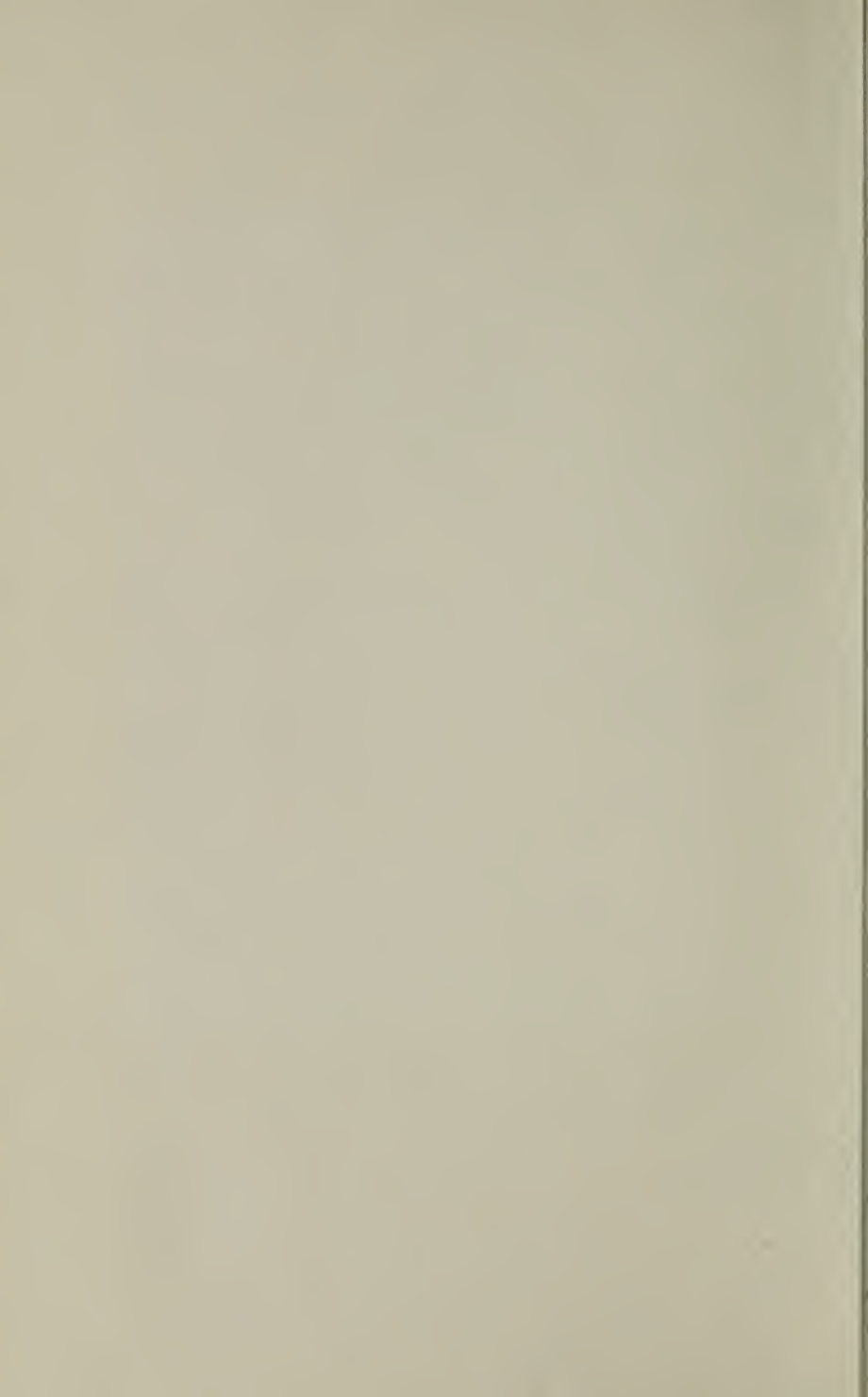
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*A Picture
of the South End*

or

*the citizens and strangers guide
to the metropolis of Massachusetts
and its southerly environs
with curious addenda*

*Additional copies of this booklet may be ordered for one dollar each through
the Civic Center and Clearing House, Inc., 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.*

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of the South End*

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Gift of
South End Historical Society

4 Feb 74

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Foreword

The engagement during the greater part of 1962 of a small group of retired men and women in the first phase of the South End historical survey was crucial to the growth and direction of the Civic Center and Clearing House, Inc. It successfully demonstrated that the study of urban history, architecture and culture for a useful civic purpose is entirely suitable to retirees and others with free or leisure time seeking a creative, useful outlet. It provided proof also that participation in this sort of undertaking does not require a lifetime of scholarly research or a string of advanced academic degrees. A retired telegraph operator did a creditable piece of work on the Deacon House. A former Japanese cook taking an A.B. degree at the age of 75 "researched" the Gettysburg Cyclorama Building (now the flower market) with important and skillful supplementary art work.

This particular group was recruited and put to work under pressure of time because of the need to develop quickly a demonstration project for a struggling infant enterprise. The training was hastier and briefer than would be the case today. Under adequate organization, work on this sort of project should be preceded by an informal but thorough and exciting learning experience which would provide sound training in methods and a background of history, culture and architecture of the area to be surveyed.

The opportunities for this type of volunteer learning-doing experience as a contribution to the community are almost unlimited in a city like Boston. They should be pursued under professional guidance so that nothing is turned out that cannot usefully and effectively serve the community. Yet they should be undertaken at such a pace of "leisure" that they add to the enjoyment and enrichment to the lives of those participating.

It is gratifying to have the work of this pioneer group at last find the light of day. Unfortunately several of the participants are no longer with us. The contribution was greater than they knew. The list of the original participants follows:

Elizabeth G. Barry

Mabel F. Gorman

Margaret H. Gould

Harry F. Cook

Jack MacKey

Frank A. Young

We are grateful to the South End Urban Renewal Committee and its former President, Royal Cloyd, for giving us the opportunity to perform this task and to make a demonstration which we consider to have been so important. Upon completion of this work the volunteers chose to continue the same sort of activity and formed an organization which has come to be known as the Boston Volunteer Citizens Group. William J. Gurney, former historical official of the Boston Redevelopment Authority,

suggested further projects relating to historic site markers, monuments and other public art in Boston. Later there has been a branching out into other areas of work such as shade-tree surveying, air pollution and tourism. The Boston Volunteer Citizens Group, under the general direction of the Civic Center and Clearing House, staffs a tourist information center in the State House for the State Department of Commerce and Development with major expansion of the activities planned for the future.

The results of all of this have been a significant volunteer contribution to Boston's civic and environmental health, and enriching experiences in the lives of the participants of the Boston Volunteer Citizens Group, whose numbers have now swollen from the small handful of 1962 to about 100. The Civic Center and Clearing House, Inc., thus regards its share in this South End accomplishment with pride and with gratitude. It was completely essential to the Center's development.

For the opportunity to have this work published and recognized we are deeply grateful to the South End Historical Society and especially to Mrs. Samuel G. Atkinson, whose connection with both the Civic Center and Clearing House, Inc. and the South End Historical Society has stimulated the resumption and completion of this project.

*John W. Putnam, President
Civic Center and Clearing House, Inc.*

Acknowledgements

In January of 1968, work was started to bring together the material at the Civic Center and the new information on the South End, all to take the form of a booklet. A new group of volunteers was gathered together through the OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS column in the Boston Globe, and through the initiative of Mr. Jack Cooper, "Honorary Mayor of the South End." Mr. Cooper, journalist, historian, did more than locate volunteers; he contributed a great amount of information. And, above all, his guidance in the matter of research was invaluable. "One has to go back into other years to look, to see, to listen to others. One has to grasp what one is after, read on and find it somewhere."

TIDBITS AND MEMORABILIA is compiled from the many letters from and conversations with "Old South Enders."

Mr. Charles A. Gallant of Franklin

Mr. Larry Davis of Brighton

Mrs. Anne Coolen of Boston

Mrs. Florence Prives of Dorchester who was also of assistance in clerical matters.

Mention must specifically be made of Mr. Charles Morgan whose charming reminiscences of his boyhood in the South End will be printed separately at another time.

Those volunteers who have contributed directly to the text are acknowledged at the conclusion of their articles.

Miss Alison Chase of Brookline was of enormous help in locating and selecting old maps and pictures.

Mrs. Elwood Siscoe of Bridgewater took a great number of photographs of Chester Square and of the home of the League of Women for Community Service on Chester Square. Although they cannot all be used, they are most helpful.

And as the project neared completion and all was chaos, in came Mrs. Paula Kozol of Wellesley Hills, whose assistance and interest were invaluable and delightful.

Julia L. Atkinson

Introduction

"Nature abhors a vacuum," said Spinoza some three centuries ago, and these words might well be taken as a capsule explanation of the new wave of South Enders, of The South End Historical Society, and of this little booklet itself.

By the end of the 1950's, the long downhill trail of Boston's South End area had virtually reached its nadir. Proud town houses had become rooming houses, rooming houses had become the pawns of absentee "slum lords," and building after building had been abandoned to the elements, as people fled from an area which had acquired a stigma. But hope was not dead. A courageous few fought to keep alive during these sad years the self-respect of their neighborhood. And they told their friends about what was here.

Fortunately, the climate was right. This was the start of the era of the "new urbanites." And here was an area, within walking distance of downtown Boston, in which there were graceful, spacious, well-constructed, 19th century homes - - - most with fine marble fireplaces, lushly embellished ceilings, and rich woodwork waiting to be revealed from under the garish coats of paint. Yet many a young couple was excited to find the prices frequently no more than back taxes. There could not fail to be a response. "When the house we were looking at looked back at us, we knew it was the one," is a typical comment from a young woman with the expression of a child whose nose is pressed to the pet shop window. And truly our houses have in a sense become our pets.

But what of our heritage? Surely the South End had a history; surely it has sites worthy of preservation. What lies behind that great void of dingy disinterest? It was to answer these questions that The South End Historical Society was founded in the spring of 1966. Since that time, with a growing membership, and with an average age probably younger than that of any comparable society in New England, the organization has achieved a number of things. A social element has been combined with an educational one in our meetings, for which a number of outstanding speakers have been our guests. And the Sunday Evening Musicales is an innovation which seems likely to be continued.

In 1967 and again in 1968, the Society has presented its annual house tour. Through this medium it is hoped that those unfamiliar with the South End may share with us some of our excitement, and that those

living in parts of the South End itself may be made more aware of the renaissance of beauty in their midst.

But still there was a vacuum. Aside from a chapter by Whitehill, and a few other scattered references, there had been no published history of the South End. This vacuum The South End Historical Society endeavored to fill, as it started collecting information; as it sent its photographer to capture the present and to copy ancient photographs of the past; and as it sought through newspaper advertisements to contact those who might remember the South End of an earlier era. This process was accelerated hugely by the generous offer of the Civic Center and Clearing House, in December of 1967, to work with us on the project.

This little book which resulted is only a first step. It should in no way be taken as a complete history of Boston's South End, for it has of necessity only touched upon a few representative features, and much remains to be researched. It is, however, a start, and we hope at a later date to be able to publish a much larger, more definitive, better illustrated work, with this pioneer work as a nucleus. Meanwhile, we shall endeavor to be the guardians of the past, the voices of today, and the heralds of a renewed tomorrow.

*Richard O. Card, President
The South End Historical Society, Inc.*

History and Development of the South End



Originally called Shawmut by the Indians, Boston is situated on what was once a peninsula. For a short time it was called "Trimountain," but in 1630, by an act of Court, the city became officially known as Boston. Boston, a town in Lincolnshire England, was especially dear to the hearts of the colonists. Lady Arabella Johnson, for whom the principal ship to the colony had been named, and her husband, Mr. Isaac Johnson, came from Boston England, as did Reverend John Cotton. It was John Cotton who delivered the farewell sermon to the settlers and who, upon coming to New England, became distinguished in his own right.

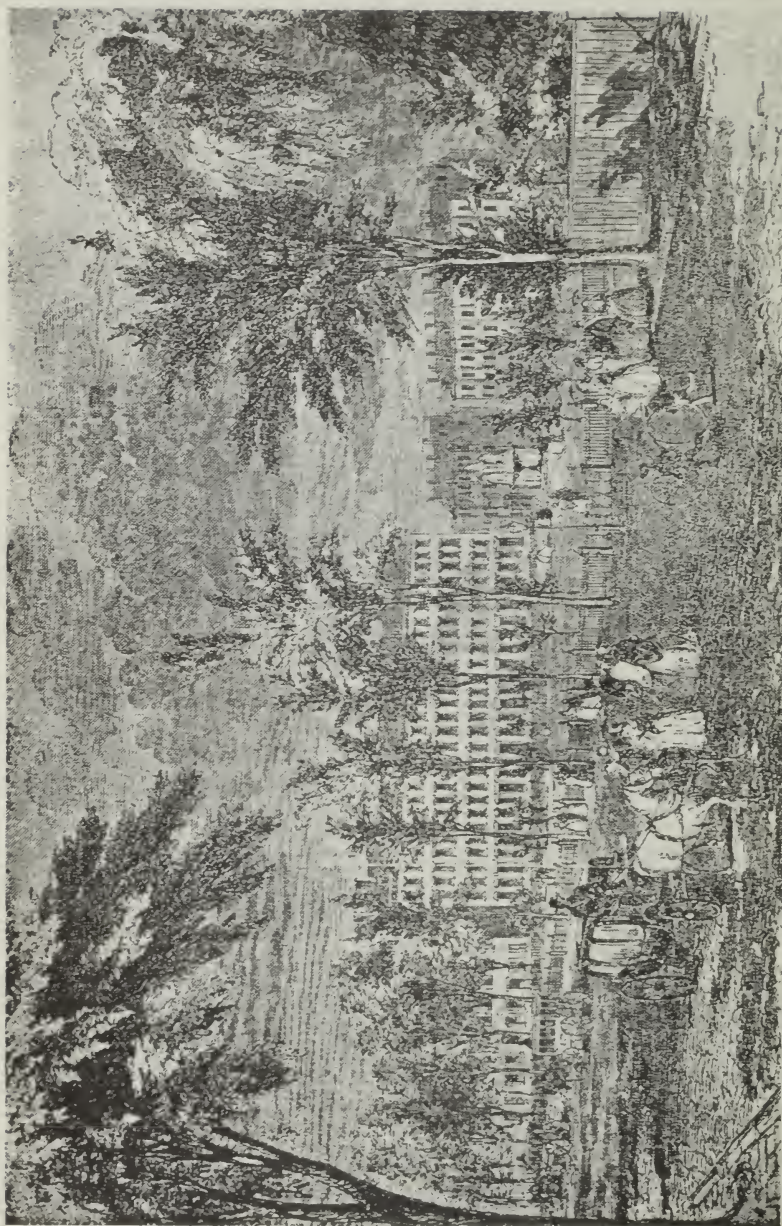
The surface of the peninsula "swelled into three eminences,"¹ Copps Hill on the North, Fort Hill on the East and Beacon Hill on the West. Beacon Hill itself was three-peaked; one was called Mt. Vernon, one called Mt. Pemberton, and the third called Beacon Hill. The peninsula was connected to the mainland or Roxbury (Roxberry), which was so-called because its "aspect was something rocky,"² by a long narrow isthmus or neck.

The only way out of the city was along this neck, which was frequently impassible because it was inundated by the high tides coming in over the marshes of the Roxbury Flats. The roadway from the city was first called Orange Street, and then was named Washington Street. It follows today substantially the same route.

In the early part of the 19th century the "manifold making over of the topography of the Old Town than which none other in Christendom has undergone since"³ began by the cutting down of Beacon Hill. "The changes in the vicinity of Beacon Hill have been numerous in modern years; and the various eminences have been removed and many streets laid out, much of the soil having been used to raise the low land in the vicinity of Charles Street, and a portion to fill the old mill pond in the vicinity of the present Haymarket Square."⁴

One of the marshes that was filled in on the west side of the peninsula created what was called first of all "The New Boston" and then the West End. And early in 1950, in the first over-enthusiastic days of Urban Renewal, the entire West End was demolished to make way for another New Boston.

That Copps Hill was not laid low by the land hungry city fathers can be explained by the reverential attitude towards the burying ground and by the fact that it really wasn't a very large hill.



Blackstone Square as Its Builders Meant It to Be

Courtesy of Bostonian Society, Old State House

Fort Hill was removed by order of the City Council in 1865 primarily to "remove many of the noted places of filth and sickness." ⁵ This once fashionable and charming part of the city succumbed to the three-pronged attack of encroaching industry, absent and profit-minded property owners, and immigrants.

In the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century, the residents of the North End and those in the very correct area of Summer, Franklin and High Streets were being threatened by business and industry, and they eyed with interest the widened Neck and this new residential area called the South End.

From the very beginnings of its development, the South End represented an early example of City Planning. The selectmen presented their plan in 1801 "in which land was divided into streets and lots, the streets being regular and drawn at right angles; and to introduce variety a large circular place was left to be ornamented with trees which . . . would add to the beauty of the town at large and be particularly advantageous to the inhabitants of this part of the Neck." ⁶

Considering that the original plan for the South End was first presented in 1801; that the first improvement in the area (consisting of the laying out of Albany Street and leaving the filling in of the land between it and Washington Street to the prospective owners) began in 1804; that the extensive creation of land began in 1834; that the laying out of the cross streets started in the late 1840's; it is obvious that the development and occupation of the South End was as dignified and stately as the era itself.

Yet very few of the familiar names of Boston's first families appeared on the lists of South End residents - - - owners, yes - - - but not residents. There was and is a clannishness about people, and in Boston " . . . different streets were given over to different clans . . . Lees, Jacksons and Putnams, all related to each other congregated about Chauncy Place and Bedford Street; Eliots in Park and Beacon; Amorys in Franklin Street; the head of the Sears family lived in the house of the Somerset Club, and their married children lived on each side . . ." ⁷

The one truly elegant and potentially fashionable house - - the Deacon (Dee - - cahn) House - - was built on Washington Street in 1848. It was built by Mr. Peter Parker, who lived on Beacon Street, for his daughter and his son-in-law. Mrs. Deacon, for all her fine connections was considered rather odd, and Mr. Deacon, although a man of great charm



Courtesy of Maurice Freedman, South End Historical Society

and excellent taste, was "without visible property - - appearing from one of the middle states." ⁸ Their house was decorated and maintained with an unusual French elegance, but they lived in it for perhaps only a decade, eventually moving to Europe. In 1871 the house was sold, along with its contents, at auction. Today only a portion of the house remains after a fire in 1896. It is now owned by Siegel Hardware and Paint Company, and it is possible to see the columns and gallery and parts of the original frescoed ceiling in the Great Hall, now a storage space.

Still standing today at the corner of Washington Street and Worcester Square is the Allen House. It, like the Deacon House, was a free-standing single mansion surrounded by pleasant grounds, but by comparison, was far less grand and less sophisticated. Mr. Allen himself was neither grand nor sophisticated, and it is easy to see that by the standards of correct Bostonians of that day - - and this - - that neither the Deacons nor the Allens quite measured up.

In 1849, it must have become apparent to the City Council that the plans for the development of the South End were not moving in quite the firm manner that they had expected, because they commissioned Cheshbrough and Parrott, Engineers, to re-plan the area on a more modest basis, and "their plan was the first large-scale layout since English Urban Planning in the late 18th century." ⁹

It seems inconceivable that Chester Square, Worcester Square, and Union Park, which were laid out in 1850-51, could be considered in any way modest. The brick, bowfronted houses splendidly ornamented with iron lacework outside, and carved woodwork, elaborate marble fireplaces and decorated ceilings inside, had from twenty to twenty-five rooms. They bespeak a way of life both formal and orderly, necessitating an immodest number of servants, whose orbit within the houses covered five flights of stairs from cellar kitchen to their small bedrooms under the roof.

The word "modest" was a seemly one in those days, and Chester Square, between Tremont Street and Shawmut Avenue on Massachusetts Avenue, is referred to in a contemporary description as a "modest park containing one and one half acres, extensively and ambitiously adorned with good iron fences, and shade trees. There is a roadway on each side lined with fine residences, some of them quite elegant and costly. In the centre of Chester Square are a beautiful fountain and fish pond; and the place is much frequented by the pretty children and trim nursery maids of the neighborhood." ¹⁰

Today the park is bisected by Massachusetts Avenue, expediting the flow of traffic by a minute or two from traffic light to traffic light. On either side of the street are what remains of the park, denuded of trees, fountains, and nursery maids. As yet these two partial circles have not been turned into parking lots. There are faint stirrings of restoration here and the contrast between the blind boarded windows and those delicately shuttered or draped is indeed dramatic.

As the parks were completed, the side streets were built up according to the plans of Chesbrough and Parrott. The streets were tree-shaded, cobblestoned, and there continued a sense of architectural unity, but the houses were just slightly less elaborate. They have ten rooms - - sometimes twelve - - but "these old Boston houses all have so much character . . . that cornice is very pretty - - very simple and very refined . . and that mantel - - how refreshing these sane and decent straight lines are after the squirms and wriggles of subsequent marble." ¹¹

And as the building up of streets and houses fanned out, it is possible to see a tendency towards simpler and smaller homes. There seems to be little compromise with quality but, more probably, a realistic pragmatic eye to the future by the developers and investors.

It has been said that the part of the South End, now called Clarendon Park, which lies between Tremont Street and Columbus Avenue, including Berkeley, Clarendon and Dartmouth Streets, was built up expressly to house the servants of the proper Bostonians from Beacon Hill and the Back Bay. Certainly the names of the streets -- Appleton, Warren, Chandler, Lawrence, or Gray -- do not belie this. And in an era which reputedly treated its household servants carelessly, it is reassuring to notice the same marble fireplaces in these small houses as are in some of the houses of the Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Part of the charm about these houses in Clarendon Park is that of the small-scale, miniature copy.

But if, between 1850-1870, there was a gradual trend away from elegant elaborate housing, such was not true of the public buildings. The churches, the schools, and the Boston City Hospital were both impressive and massive.

The foundations for the Immaculate Conception Church (and for the original buildings of Boston College) were laid in April 1858 and the church was dedicated with solemn splendor in March of 1861. At the entrance to the Church are three large, massive doors, and three corresponding doors lead from the vestibule into the Church, which accomodates 1500. The wonderful sense of light and color comes from the extensive

use of white marble throughout the Upstairs Church and the pure bright colors of the paintings. The electric lighting so carefully put in in 1895, the shining brasses of the altar rail, and the glittering candles all contribute to the glowing brightness.

The Peoples Baptist Church was first organized in 1805. For some time the laws of the colony compelled "the colored people" to attend church, but they had to sit in especially provided galleries where they were not seen by the congregation, nor could they see the service. As early as 1788 a group of Negroes were having religious services in a school house, and in 1819 the first Negro Church, built entirely by Negro labor, was built on Smith Court, off Joy Street. (The building is presently used as a synagogue.) It was at this church that William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner held meetings of the first anti-slavery society.

The move to the present building on the corner of Camden and Tremont Street was made in 1898, as by that time the majority of the congregation was living in or near the South End. The building was already being used by a small group of worshippers, who built it in 1868 when their church was destroyed by fire. They had brought with them the Paul Revere Bell, inscribed "The living to the Church I call, and to the grave I summon all." Today the church building itself is sadly eclipsed by jutting store-fronts, small industries, and the massive demolition of substandard housing in the area. But it has a large congregation and a variety of activities beyond the usual church groups.

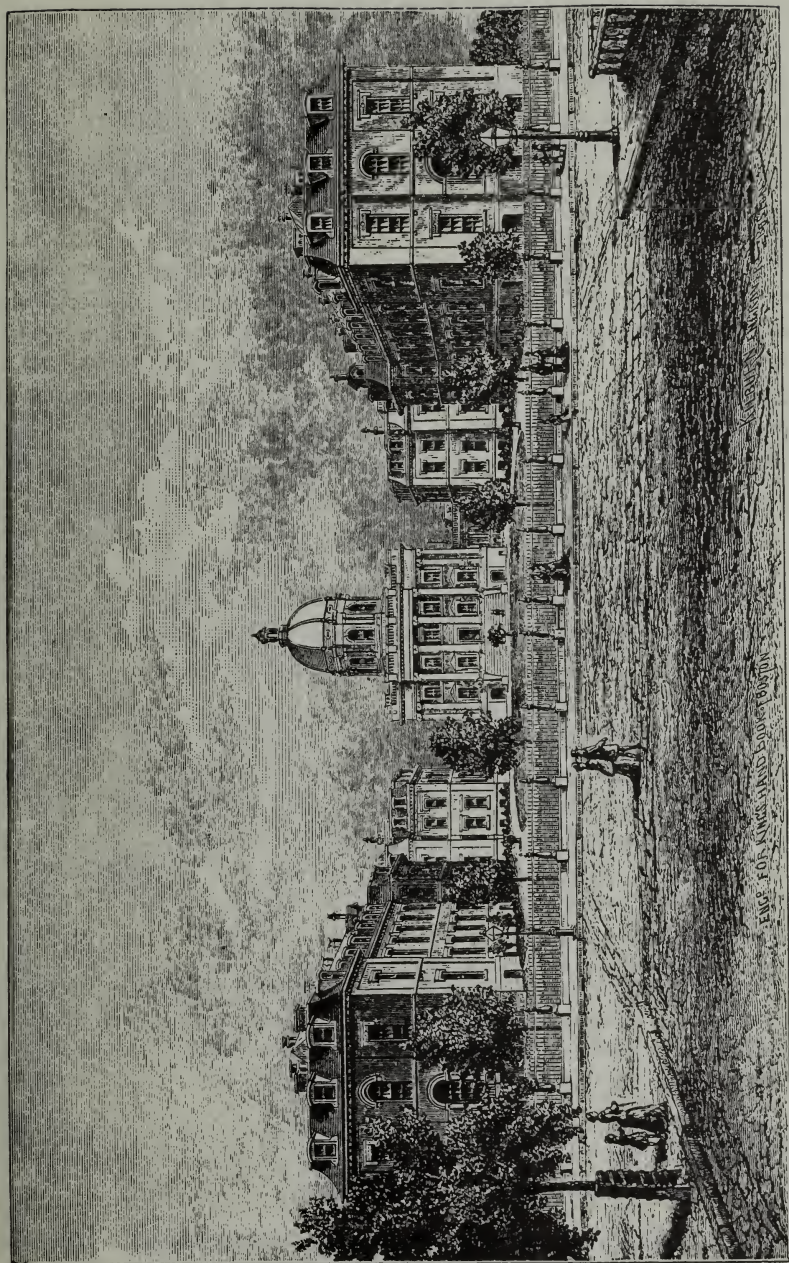
Of the two dozen houses of worship in the South End by the last decade of the nineteenth century, there are less than one dozen today actively being used. Most of them were built to accommodate congregations of eight hundred to one thousand; and in the past thirty or forty years the diminishing congregations and the overwhelming costs of their upkeep have presented almost unsolvable problems. One church which once had a noble spire, now has a newly bricked-over stump. Another stands sightless, its great stained-glass windows gone. A third, once a synagogue, has become the psychedelic and profitable haunt of the flower children and their disciples.

Of the schools, the Girls' High School and the Boston English High and Latin School were prestigious monuments to Boston beliefs in Public Education, beliefs which today seem to be somewhat in abeyance. Then there was a school for just about everybody in addition to the usual primary, and grammar schools. There was a school for newsboys and boot-



THE BOSTON ENGLISH-HIGH AND LATIN SCHOOL

Courtesy of Bostonian Society, Old State House



Courtesy of Bostonian Society, Old State House

blacks, and an evening high school, a school for deaf-mutes, evening industrial schools, a kindergarten, and even a school for girls.

Girls did not attend public schools generally during the entire school year until 1828, and when Girls' High School was built in 1870 it was indeed a forward looking venture. The building which was located on West Newton Street was a huge five-story building with a mansard roof and was considered "the most substantial, most costly, largest school edifice in the United States." ¹²

The Boston English High and Latin School, which was started in 1877 and completed by 1880, was to be "the largest structure in America devoted to educational purposes and the largest in the world used as a free public school." ¹³ It occupied almost a complete block from Warren Avenue to Clarendon, Montgomery and Dartmouth Streets. A description of the drill hall gives a sense of the building's magnificence and substance. ". . . the drill hall is a grand feature. . . the floor is of thick plank, calked like a ship's deck. . . the hall is to accommodate the whole school-battalion and can be used for mounted drill. . . its galleries could seat 3,000 persons. . . it is treated so as to get a constructional effect of open timberwork. . . the wood, of hard pine shellacked and varnished; walls of Philadelphia brick laid in red mortar and trimmed with sandstone." ¹⁴

Regrettably the building was not "a glory of the city, and a credit to the artisans," ¹⁵ for soon after it was completed, it was obviously a case of too much too late. There were simply not enough potential pupils in the city, and both the parochial schools and the private schools were increasing in number. At one time it was considered for use of the Boston Public Library, but this was not acceptable to the trustees, so it was used as planned for fifty years until being torn down. A small low elementary school takes its place.

The Boston City Hospital however, is never big enough for the demands upon it, and looking at it today - - with its hodge-podge of additions obscuring the original buildings - - it is impossible to envisage the dignity and spaciousness of its beginnings.

The charitable institutions for which Boston was - - and is - - so noted abounded in bewildering variety in the South End. Some were publicly organized, but most were under private sponsorship.

One of these charitable organizations which, in the beginning served only the South End but has grown to be world-wide in scope is

the Morgan Memorial. Henry Morgan devoted his entire life striving to relieve want and to relieve the suffering of others. His credo was "The poor do not belong to any denomination; the world is my field." Their headquarters were the old Church of the Disciples building on Shawmut Avenue and Corning Street. This Mr. Morgan was able to purchase through the influence of Governor Claflin. After Mr. Morgan's death, his work was carried on by Reverend Edgar Helms, who saw that the particular situation of the South End was more than enough to challenge him. He originated the Goodwill Industries, which now operate in 135 cities in the United States and in 17 foreign lands. The Morgan Memorial now operates a rehabilitation center for the severely handicapped, summer camps for the most needy children, a school for troubled boys, and housing units for the handicapped.

Among some other charitable institutions were St. Joseph's Home for Sick and Destitute Servant Girls, and the Scots Charitable Society, which is the oldest charitable society in the city. There was also the Penitent Females' Refuge and Bethesda Society which established a home on Rutland Street for "the reformation of abandoned women and admission is conditional upon an expression of a sincere desire to reform." ¹⁶ The Home for Aged and Indigent Men was on Springfield Street; the Boston Female Asylum was located on Washington Street; and the Children's Friend Society on Rutland.

These were not large in size and had the uniqueness of individuality. For the most part, their headquarters were located in the solid, spacious houses; houses that were planned and built for use as comfortable, affluent homes. And the use of houses by institutions, however high-minded, was a sad portent for the hopefully planned residential area that was envisaged for the South End.

There were, of course, other evidences, other signs of the decline of the South End. Two of the most important factors in this decline were the panic of 1873 and the filling in of the Back Bay.

Professor Albert B. Wolfe, who wrote "The Lodging House Problem in Boston" in 1906 and used the South End as the source of his material, believed the panic to be the outstanding cause. "The immediate occasion for the change seems to have been the real estate situation of Columbus Avenue. The street was built up (in 1870) with a somewhat cheaper style of houses . . . which were built on mortgages, and after the panic of '73 had broken over the city most of them were in possession of banks. The banks sold them for what they would bring, and the result

was an acute drop in value of Columbus Avenue real estate . . . The shock thus felt on Columbus Avenue with such force gradually had the effect of disturbing the equilibrium in the rest of the South End."¹⁷

This quotation also serves to point up another fact which is rarely advantageous to any neighborhood. The absentee-landlord, investment minded as he is, was from the beginning an unfortunate factor in South End development, and so continues today. For example, H. Hollis Hunnewell was an early speculator in South End real estate, and the land which he bought from the City of Boston in 1846 at 80¢ a square foot, he sold in 1856 for \$2.15 a square foot. He also built six row houses on Washington Street which he subsequently sold. No Hunnewell ever lived in them.

Another first family real estate investor was Lucius Manly Sargent. One rainy day in the late fall of 1830, on his way to his country home, he noticed a poorly attended auction on Shawmut Avenue. He stopped and to his delight was able to pick up four acres of land for \$270, a transaction which reportedly afforded him great satisfaction. In view of the fact that Mr. Sargent lived on Beacon Hill, and had a home in the country, it is obvious that the land he bought that day was not for his personal use.

The filling in of the Back Bay, which, since the erection of the Mill Dam, had become a stinking rat-infested marsh, was started in 1857. Unfortunately, the accepted plan for the Back Bay showed little awareness of the South End; there was no sense of continuity in any way, and the two areas were also separated by railroad tracks - - long a recognized boundary between the more and the less fashionable - - plus, south of Boylston Street, a drab strip of land which seemed not to inspire development.

The identical row houses characteristic of the South End were replaced in the Back Bay by row houses of great variety and richness. And these Back Bay houses were invariably owner built and occupied.

There were other reasons too for the rapid downward path of the South End: massive immigration from Europe, infiltration of lesser industries, and - - not so significant perhaps but interesting - - a firmly felt stigma towards row houses all identically planned. Such housing was associated with a low social and economic stratum.

So, slowly but surely, the South End slipped into the sadness of decay. It became an area of rooming houses, a "city wilderness,"¹⁸ the

skid row of Boston. (When the West End and Scollay Square were demolished, the path of migration of their inhabitants - - the wretchedly poor, the rootless immigrants - - was to the South End.)

"Every house seems to wince as you go by, and button itself up to the chin for fear you should find out it had no shirt on, so to speak. I don't know what's the reason but these material tokens of a social decay afflict me terribly; a tipsy woman isn't dreadfuller than a haggard old house, that's once been a home in a street like this . . ." 19

But among the life-long South Enders is a fierce fondness of the area which, coupled with the militant zeal of the increasing number of people moving back to this part of the inner city, has given the South End a special character. There are sixteen neighborhood associations whose monthly meetings are frequently fiery; there are other independent organizations to help the disadvantaged and to keep a proprietary eye on urban renewal. The old-timers and the new-comers may have unresolved conflicts, but have the common goal to maintain the character of the South End during the process of upgrading it. The home owner and those who rent do not often see eye to eye but they, too, have these same goals.

The variety of inhabitants is incredibly wide, socially, economically, ethnically and morally. The South End is potentially the most intriguing residential area within the City of Boston, and a city must have people living in it to have character and vigor.

Footnotes

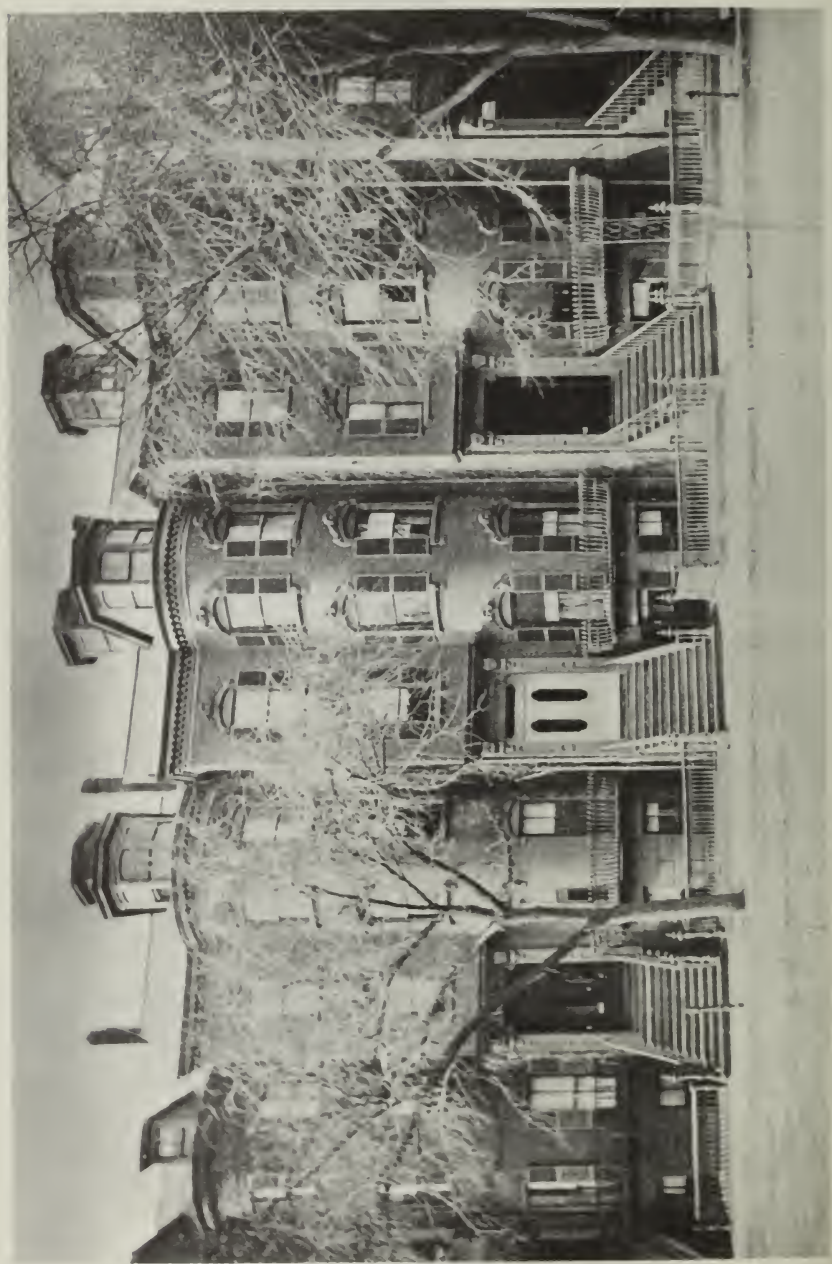
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A Brick Block

by Robert Beverly Hale*, from *Six Stories and Some Verses*,
Bowles, Boston, 1896



* Son of Edward Everett Hale



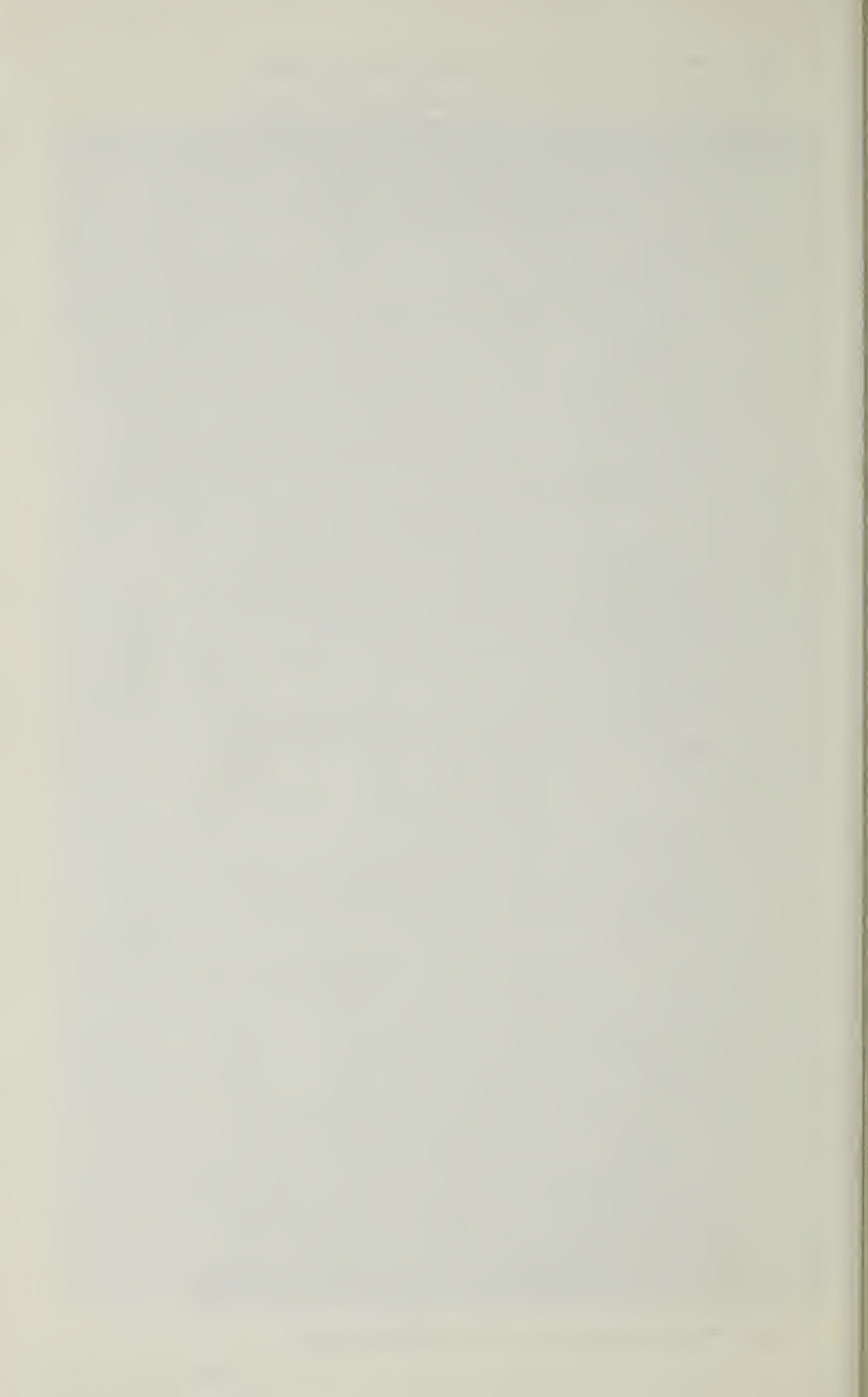
Courtesy of Maurice Freedman South End Historical Society

*Eight small brick houses, standing side by side,
Eight flights of steps, narrow and long and steep;
Different dimensions; all nineteen feet wide;
Some forty-two, some forty-three feet deep.
Each with a curved bow-window and a dome;
So much alike that children in their doubt
Must count, poor things, to know which house is home!
A curious thing to write a poem about.*

*And yet, inside, are men as wise as we --
And happy, though with little cause for mirth,
To each, his nineteen feet by forty-three
Seems the important corner of the earth.
Each has his secret tears, his open jest;
Each has his pride in the brick cell he calls
His Home, and somehow knows it from the rest.
Those narrow rooms are his ancestral halls --
His little Universe, within four walls.*

*These men give plays, life-like beyond belief,
Whose actors really live and really die,
So full of nonsense, and so full of grief,
One scarcely knows whether to laugh or cry.
Here, some Antonio mourns his unpaid debt;
Here, some real Shylock counts his darling boards,
Here, a real Romeo sighs for Juliet.
Think what great sights this little block affords --
Eight first-class Shakespeare's plays are on the boards!*

*The lover cannot see. His dancing eyes
Detect no fault, no ugliness, no sin;
His sweetheart's house seems fair as Paradise,
Because he knows his sweetheart is within.
I, too, am growing blind. I cannot see
The ugly house-front or the narrow stair.
Those unknown friends are very dear to me,
And as I gaze across the dingy square,
Eight homes of those I love are standing there.*



The Allen House

The house at 1682 Washington Street, at the entrance to Worcester Square, can be considered a reflection of the South End's history. As with much of the land in the area, this piece of property was once owned by a real estate speculator and builder of row houses. In 1859 the property was purchased by Mr. Aaron H. Allen, a dealer in furniture and feathers, who then had a large brownstone mansion constructed on the site.

Mr. Allen lived in it for twelve years and then moved to the Back Bay area, leasing his house on Washington Street to the Central Club, a South End organization for prominent men.

When the Back Bay was filled in and began to be viewed as a fashionable residential section, it drew people away from the South End. Indeed, the Central Club itself moved from the Allen house to Boylston Street in 1881, and the house was let to a series of neighborhood organizations. For a while it was even the headquarters of the First Regiment Infantry.

In 1894 the house changed hands once again as it was sold to the Catholic Union of Boston, which remodeled and enlarged it, adding a large auditorium with a bowling alley in the basement. It was then used as a social club and had two of Boston's Irish Catholic Mayors among its members. The house remained in the hands of the Catholic Union until 1937, after which it was used for a time as an annex to Boston College High School.

In 1941, the Lebanese American Club of Boston became the next owner of the house. In time, it became apparent that the Club was unable to adequately maintain such a large abode, and it finally fell into such a bad state of disrepair that the neighbors angrily complained to the city.

In 1958, the city took over the property for non-payment of taxes, and in 1960 it was sold at public auction to Mr. Max Feinerman. Mr. Feinerman originally intended to tear down the house and replace it with an apartment building, but the zoning laws controlling building height proved to be a stumbling block.

While the Allen house is typical of the South End's history in its fashionable beginnings, in the exodus of its owner to the Back Bay and the suburbs, and in its gradual deterioration, it is not entirely typical in its construction.

It is, first of all, a much more pretentious house than most in the area. Brownstone, rather than the customary brick, covers the Worcester Square and Washington Street facades of the building - - although the party wall and the kitchen (which extended almost out to the stable in back) was of brick. The house is unusually large - - 43 feet square and approximately the same in height. It has a raised basement, bay windows, a flight of steps up to the front door, and three stories above the basement, the top one ending in a mansard roof, as do many of the South End houses. The little cupola on the roof also has its counterpart in other larger houses, notably in Chester Square. But the little yard which surrounded the house on two sides was not common, nor is the interior design of a central staircase and rooms opening off both sides of a central hall. Neither is it usual to have a separate kitchen wing. Inside, some of the rooms are dark and unevenly proportioned, being too long in relation to their width.

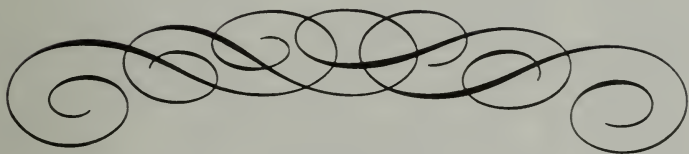
The house is also unique in the variety of incised and attached ornament which decorates it. It is not so much the design of the ornament which is remarkable, but that it should be used and in such profusion, for many of these designs are commonly found on the furniture of the period. The lions' paws on the porch columns and front windows, balustrades could have been derived from a similar concluding motif on a table leg. This suggests that the furniture dealer, Mr. Allen, was responsible for the ornamentation of the house.

Shirley Gould

.....

One cannot help speculating as to what is in store for the house today. Will some organization see in it an ideal future home? Will a governmental agency help to bring about its renewal as a bit of historical architecture inspiring to its neighbors? Or will the gracefully carved brownstone crumble under the wrecker's ball? Only the future can tell. One can only hope that a way will be found whereby this mellowed jewel of Victoriana may once again be allowed to serve as a pillar of the South End.

558 Massachusetts Avenue





Courtesy of Mrs. Elwood Siscoe

Around 1860 the sea captain and shipping merchant John Farwell built a house in the crescent of Chester Square at 558 Massachusetts Avenue. A tall house with a flight of steps leading up to the front door, on the exterior it is distinguished from its neighbors by the particularly fine iron work, reminiscent of New Orleans, at the first and second story bay windows. Behind the first floor bay is a long ballroom with, at either end, a fine carved Italian marble fireplace surmounted by a large mirror and two elaborate chandeliers. The entrance hall is wide for a South End house (approximately eight feet) and the carved dark wood staircase is massive. Indeed it seems a most suitable staircase for ladies in hoop skirts and crinolines. It is easy to imagine them drifting down the stairs to dance in the ballroom with young men, perhaps in the uniform of the Union Army, who would later escort them in to supper in the huge dining room behind the ballroom. The dining room still contains its original table, a heavy Victorian one, which, when fully opened, seats 35.

It may have been on nights when the family entertained and the household was too busy to be very observant, or perhaps it was on other quieter nights that fleeing slaves slipped into the house, since Captain Farwell was an abolitionist and his home a stop on the underground railway.

In addition to being a successful businessman, sea captain, and a humanitarian, one wonders if Captain Farwell was not also something of a sentimentalist, for on the newel post at the foot of the stairs is carved a good-sized setter, said to be a likeness of the Captain's own dog. In any case, it is charmingly done. The dog is curled up, the curve of his spine following the curve of the post, and incised into the wood are the wavy hairs of his coat.

On ascending the stairs one is struck by the three beautiful arches formed by Corinthian columns and elaborate plaster work in the upper hall. Once standing in this hall, one has these arches over the stair well on one side and three corresponding mirrors, also set in arches formed by pilasters and more plaster work on the other side. The effect is stunning. The mirrors themselves are particularly fine ones, imported from France.

The library which faces the street, and the sitting room which faces the back of the house are entered from this hall. Both are large, well-

proportioned rooms containing imported marble fireplaces and a few well-preserved pieces of the original furniture. A line of gold leaf around the walls of the library near the ceiling calls attention to an especially lovely cornice. Another feature of these rooms and those on the floor below, which is unusual in a South End house, is the hardwood floors.

The bedrooms are on the top two floors and a kitchen-breakfast room on the street level.

Except for such modern amenities as plumbing, central heating and electricity, the house has been altered very little since Captain Farwell lived there. Only the butler's pantry, off the dining room and next to the secondary staircase leading up from the kitchen, has been changed. It has been turned into a small serving kitchen.

The house was occupied by the Farwell family until 1910, but stood empty from 1910 to 1920 when it was bought by the League of Women for Community Service. They repaired the damage suffered during these ten years when the house was untenanted and have kept it in excellent condition since then.

It seems particularly appropriate that the house of an abolitionist should have been taken over by a group of Negro women dedicated to community service.

Shirley Gould

Immigration of Ethnic Groups

The South Cove Section of Boston's South End is roughly that area from the waterfront west on Summer Street to Washington Street and south to Dover Street and east to Albany Street. An area of about 186 acres was filled in between 1806 and 1843. The Boston and Albany Railroad was built on the filled-in land, and because the railroad served New York State and western Massachusetts there were 84 streets in the South End named after New York and western Massachusetts cities and towns. The street that paralleled the railroad, named Albany, after New York's capitol city, is now partially under the Southeast Expressway. Urban Renewal has eliminated some others, among them Seneca, Oneida, Oswego, Troy and Rochester.

Although today the South Cove is the home of the third largest Chinese community in the nation, it was at one time a kaleidoscope of national and racial strains. Just before World War I, the Quincy Grammar School on Tyler Street could boast of 14 different national groups represented in its classes. Today it is almost 100% Chinese, and incidently, probably the oldest school building in the city and perhaps in the state in continuous use, having been built in 1847.

As fast as the Cove was filled in, the native Yankee stock moved to build their homes and churches. Just about this time Irish immigration began to increase, and shortly after the Civil War, the pace of immigration increased and Yankee movement out began. As the Irish filled the Cove, the native stock moved further down in the South End. Soon there were Chinese on Beach and Oxford streets, and on Oxford Place. Some Italian families came in to live on Albany, Hudson, and Harvard streets. Greeks came and concentrated on Kneeland Street. By the turn of the century, the South Cove was a blend of Yankee, Irish, Jewish, Italian, Chinese, Greek, Syrian and Lebanese.

But this pattern was not to continue. Soon the native stock moved out. The Irish moved to Brighton, South Boston and Dorchester. By the time of World War I, most of the South Cove to all intents and purposes had become a Syrian-Lebanese community, with a few Irish and Italian and Jewish families scattered among them. For a few years change seemed at a standstill. Ethnic lines were fairly well drawn. The New York streets from Broadway to Northampton Street, with Harrison Avenue as the main artery, was a very compact Jewish community. At the other end

of the cove was the Chinese section, while in the center, the Syrians and Lebanese lived.

The immigration of the Syrians and Lebanese witnessed its greatest growth between 1900 and 1924. The Lebanese are the descendents of the Phoenicians and Hittites, while the Syrians are their Semetic cousins whose heritage springs from Damascus, the oldest continually inhabited city in the world. These are a business-oriented people, as witnessed by the early poll tax records: "merchant, dealer, salesman, peddler and dry-goods." Like the Chinese they have strong family ties; law breakers are rare and juvenile delinquency is a zero. Their contribution to the wars of our country is a matter of record. Four squares in the South Cove are named for Lebanese boys who made the supreme sacrifice in World War I: Thomas Kareem Square at Kneeland and Albany Streets, John S. Lutfy Square at Oak and Tyler Streets, Thomas Abraham Square at Harvard and Hudson Streets, and Michael Abraham Square at Oak and Hudson Streets.

As has been the case with earlier newcomers to this land, they brought their faith with them and built their own churches.

These people were not to remain long in the South Cove. Shortly before World War I, the movement out began, mainly into two widely separated areas of Boston. One shift was into the heart of the South End to the brownstone and brick houses of that area. The other move was further out, into West Roxbury and out towards Dedham.

Thomas J. Shire, Sr.

Eyewitnessing the South End Today

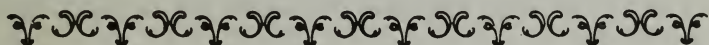
According to Mr. Royal Cloyd, President of the South End Federation of Community Organizations, the South End is distinguished by the fact that the "process of racial, social, economic and ethnic polarization has not taken a very significant toll."

In one section, there are people on welfare, millionaires, politicians, artists, a Negro couple from an Alabama farm, families from Puerto Rico and Nebraska, about "25% of Boston's architects," and a federal government consultant or two. "The net result," says Mr. Cloyd, is "not Paradise, but confrontation, clashes of background, education and culture, all of which produce discussion and more discussion. Not the philosophical kind, but talk about things like how often you take a bath, how and when your garbage is collected, the maintenance of your house, and whether your front door is mahogany or painted pink."

Here is an opportunity for a great degree of tolerance. "Diversity," he says, "excites some people and makes them wonderfully aware and politically manipulative. Others are destroyed by it."

The obvious advantages of living in the South End center around "this wonderful architectural heritage," which today provides "housing amenities for those who want to live in the city luxuriously and at a reasonable price." Mr. Cloyd estimates that over one million dollars have been spent on rehabilitating one block alone.

"The American Dream," he suggests can be conceived of here in pockets, with portions of neighborhoods designated for particular groups. "If we're trying to create a good society, there must be arbitrary definitions as to what that means." Assuming poverty a "bad thing," there must be opportunities "so that those who have aspiration can achieve, can become what they want to become, can be responsible citizens."



Mr. Kenneth L. Brown, Director of the United South End Settlement House, sees the South End as "potentially unifiable," with the possibility of a "wonderful kind of leadership evolving from the mixed ethnic, racial, and cultural scheme of things."

One of the main problems today is "the limited housing supply for those who need it." Low income people in the community, he says "have trouble relating to what they see and the promises made are not always carried out." Non-profit developers usually have to fight their way through a maze of paperwork.

There is still only token integration, Mr. Brown says, and the incoming white residents generally send their children to private schools. In addition, he says that ghettos in Boston are comparatively fixed - - with less mobility than in other cities - - so the "key to everything" is equal job opportunity.

"If businessmen could be persuaded to hire people with marginal skills and give them on-the-job training," it would be a progressive step. Organizations like the Office of Economic Opportunity are valuable in giving people a sense of the contribution they can make to the community, and as a result, "interesting new kinds of leadership are emerging."

Mr. Brown thinks that an agency such as United South End Settlements "should see itself as the stabilizing influence in the community," giving people confidence and assurance "that we're available." While outside assistance can be helpful, the important aim is to develop leadership among community members themselves, and so there is a great deal of emphasis on citizen-neighborhood involvement.



"There's no place like the South End," according to Mrs. Mary Rozantes, 32 Clarendon Street, "We moved here because we wanted a mixed neighborhood."

There have been many changes in recent years, she thinks. Formerly, "you could walk the streets any time of the day or night. There were no antagonisms."

Today, "there's more antagonism. Everybody's opinionated." A few years ago, "there were differences, and yet everybody got along. There wasn't so much prejudice. You know, I hate that word 'prejudice'. It's like an obscenity. Everybody is getting too sensitive about things. It just isn't worth it."

"Broken families," she thinks are a major cause of today's tensions. In the South End a few years ago, "there was a male influence in families - the father was the boss - - which is lacking in some minority groups now. You'll never convince me that poverty alone is a cause of crime."

On one hand, she sees the middle class as "putting the South End out of the poor man's bracket," But, without the middle class, "the poor would have no incentive."

Most of today's housing projects, she feels are "big mistakes - - citadels of sadness, drunkenness, frustration. There are the same people with the same frustrations, the same sad way of life, and they take it out by fighting - - among themselves and with others in the community."

The BRA, to Mrs. Rozantes is "an office of frustration - - a powerless branch. The words are magic: 'Urban Renewal' - - what does it mean? If they can carry it out, that's something else."

One change Mrs. Rozantes notices in the South End is that "new-comers don't unfurl their banners quite so readily now - - and they aren't so quick to crusade."

Negroes should "forget the past," she thinks. "They're trying to influence ignorant people with grievances that no longer matter."

"No one race can blame another for lack of competence. Both sides need awakening." And most problems, she adds, can best be solved on the neighborhood level.

People should "be honest" with one another, she thinks, and suggests that "shutting down all the newspapers and TV" would eliminate exaggeration of the actual situation.

Racists on both sides should be approached, Mrs. Rozantes feels, or "with additional fancy grievances, we're going to have an anarchy."



Mr. Edwin Abrams, Consultant for Interfaith Housing Corporation, finds the South End not only a wonderful place to live, but also "a reflection of the Great American Melting Pot that never really melted."

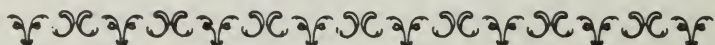
Outstanding architecture, mixed racial and ethnic groups, and a number of parks and institutions combine to make the community unique.

But diversity and such phenomena as urban renewal may sometimes breed contempt.

For some, he explains, "urban renewal means people removal." For others, it means "a perpetuation of the ghetto." There is "perhaps inevitable conflict of interest," in any case.

Mr. Abrams feels that the BRA housing plan, "doesn't always take into account the needs of low income families." A part of this plan, however, the 500-unit Castle Square project of which Mr. Abrams is director, is "probably the most integrated unit in the country," providing housing at a reasonable cost.

Admitting that the South End today is "shy of the dream" Mr. Abrams nevertheless thinks the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages.



Sculptor Kahlil Gibran and his wife describe the South End today as "a good place to find out what life is all about."

It's "the last stand for middle income people in the city," they say, "a place with mixed strata . . . a good experiment." It is also "an ideal place for children to grow up and learn about life first-hand, without having to experience it vicariously at 14 or 15."

South End residents have many different backgrounds and nationalities, and all the diversity means "cooperation is essential." "I think we can feel proud of this," says Mrs. Gibran. Unlike some liberal factions who "tell the city what to do, then go home to the suburbs," people of the South End are involved in the city's problems.

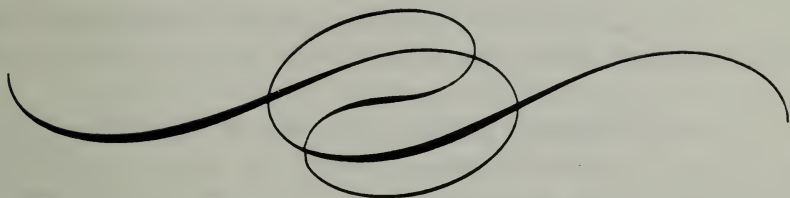
"At least we're experiencing life - - not watching TV and wondering what urban problems are like. So many people see the city only as a place to work, and they take the economic and cultural advantages, then go home to a nothing area."

"Every kind of social problem is here," says Mr. Gibran, and the area has been referred to as a "refuge for criminals," but these factors combine to produce a unique, "multi-level kind of living."

The Gibrans think there is a greater degree of tolerance in the South End than elsewhere. Here, "people have tried to live with all kinds of situations," but protest comes from have-nots and home-owners alike. Many South End residents are long-time home owners. The Gibrans next-door-neighbors, for instance, have been there since the twenties, and their six children have remained in the South End.

Barbara Sealock

Tid Bits and Memorabilia



. There were no poorer people than some of those that lived on Village Street in my day. My poor mother brought up four of us on very little. When my father wasn't on a "Bender" his salary was very small. We kids helped some. We had a little home-made push cart and would go around gathering empty whiskey bottles, and rags and occasionally lead pipe out of a vacant house, which we sold to the Junky.

. We gathered firewood and followed the coal wagons on Albany Street hoping they would drop a few lumps. If pickings were tough, we would start throwing snowballs at the drivers, who in turn would heave a couple of lumps of coal at us.

. We shovelled snow from the sidewalks for the more affluent people on Dwight, Hanson and Milford streets for about 15 cents a house.

. As for Christmas presents, there was no Santa Claus. The only gift we ever received was from our landlord, Mr. Quincy. He would bring a little ten cent toy to each kid in the house, and we appreciated that more than the kids today that get gifts worth a thousand times more.

. Then, of course, the old time "Fourth's" (of July). We couldn't afford to buy firecrackers, but the morning after the 17th of June (Bunker Hill Day) the gutters would be knee deep in fireworks. We would scrounge enough misfires to last us over the 4th.

. And, of course, the old horse-drawn street sweepers and watering carts to clean up the mess.

. Remember the old lamp-lighters, who came around and lit the gaslights at night and extinguished them in the morning.

. I remember the Grand Opera House. We used to sit in the top balcony for a dime, and see a tear jerker such as "Ten Nights in a Bar-room," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," etc. Then after the play, they would put on a wrestling show, with such champs as Zybylko, Cyclone Burns, Doc Roller.

. I remember a Livery Stable where the Franklin Union is on Berkeley Street. I can remember the Hostler there with one arm that took care of the horses and carriages. Of course, there were very few autos in those days. The only one around our way was owned by the Cohens, who ran the Continental Dye House on Dover Street. I can still remember the thrill of a short ride in their old Mitchell Touring car.

. Speaking of Park Square, I can remember the old G.A.R. Civil War Vets parades on the 30th of May, and watched them dwindle away until they were all gone. I can also remember them paving Park Square with wooden blocks. Every time I smell creosote today I think of that.

. I remember Hall's Barber School on Washington Street. My mother would give me fifteen cents for a haircut, and I'd go over to the Barber School and get one for a nickel and keep the other dime.

. I remember Cat Alley, between Dover and Dwight Streets. When a couple of kids had any differences, they would go down the Alley and punch it out.

. As for athletics, I remember kick the bar, peggy, and the scrub ball games. We never had a good ball. We would get hold of an old golf ball and tie string around it until it was the size of a baseball and then wrap it in tape.

. My father had a horse and wagon and sold beer to a family trade in those days.

. The Langham Hotel, a full block long from Worcester Street to West Springfield Street was a plush hotel. Some of its noted guests were the Boston Bean Shooters (Red Sox), Sarah Bernhardt, and the Prince of Wales.

. John L. Sullivan, Champion of the World pugilist, was a well-known South End character. He trained at O'Donnell's gymnasium, corner of East Concord and Washington streets. He once owned a barroom on Dover Street.

. The Castle Square Theater, now demolished, was located at the corner of Tremont and Chandler streets. (Now the site of the Animal

Rescue League and the Hotel Diplomat.) This playhouse was the foundation and birth of some of our famous stage and screen stars. It was a block long, and part of it was the Castle Square Hotel known for its cuisine. The theater developed careers for such well-known stars as John Craig and his wife Mary Young, Bette Davis, Basil Rathbone, Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontaine.

. Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, once had a workshop at the corner of West Newton and Washington streets. It was a rooming house then and the building still stands.

. In the rear of the Franklin Square House, on Washington Street, between East Newton and East Concord Streets, is one of the oldest cemeteries in Boston. It is called the Old South Cemetery, once privately owned, now city owned and kept up by the city.

. There was an old floating bathhouse at the Dover Street Bridge where we learned to swim. Later on, after we learned, we used to dive off the lumber wharf at Albany Street.

. The Dover Street Bathhouse between Harrison Avenue and Albany Streets was the first public bathhouse in the United States. For two cents you got towel, soap, and a shower.

. There was a hotel known as the Clarendon Hotel on Tremont Street. Originally it had an open air palm garden, German style, with singing waiters. The garden had a German band and tables, perhaps Boston's first Pop Concerts, gingham table cloths, and was decorated by streamers and Japanese lanterns.

. The South End once had another street railway system, independent of the Boston Elevated System, known as the West End Street Railway, operating what is known as the "Belt Line." This independent line operated a "Mail Car" and would stop at all branch area post offices to drop off and pick up mail pouches.

. Duplain's French Bakery, originally located on Albion Street, supplied bread, rolls, and pastries only to the most elegant hotels in the city. Their wagons were always drawn by teams of white horses.

. At the corner of West Canton and Washington streets around 1908 there was a saloon operated by Pat Bowen, politically identified,

having in front of his establishment a large Howard Clock with his name on it. On this spot James Michael Curley opened his street corner rallies when he was seeking the berth of City Alderman. As most of his rallies were soap box rostrums, many a fight ensued and they were handled by Curley's crew, brutally or otherwise.

. The organ in All Saint's Evangelical Lutheran Church on West Newton Street is one of Boston's finest. When Albert Schweitzer visited Boston in the thirties he made a special trip to see and play the organ.

. At the Clarendon Street Baptist Church on Montgomery Street, the wife of the first pastor, Mr. Howard Malcolm, and Dr. J. D. Fisher originated the Blind Asylum movement. From this grew Perkins Institute for the Blind. At this same church, the Gordon College of Theology and Missions was founded.

. Old Saint Patrick's Church, which was destroyed by fire in 1965, is said to be the church featured in Edwin O'Connor's "Edge of Sadness." It was located at Northampton Street.

. Edwin Booth, the famous Shakespearean actor, and brother of President Lincoln's assassin, once lived at number eleven James Street.

. The Puritan Theater, a movie house near the corner of Washington Street and Massachusetts Avenue, staged amateur nights with Sam Cohen. Here many famous stars were "born." Eddie Cantor and George Jessel used to do a blackface act, and "Bojangles" Robinson used to dance here.

. Louis B. Mayer lived at 17 Rochester Street, in the South End, and worked at a junk yard in Chelsea. He married the daughter of the proprietor of the kosher butcher shop across the street (who was also cantor of the Emerald Street Synagogue), and his first exposure to the movie business was at a local nickelodeon called the Hub.

. Remember John the Barber that preached in the Dover Street Rescue Mission. We kids used to go there and, just as poor John would be going good with his sermon, we would throw old vegetables at him and run like hell.

. Gelett Burgess, who wrote the famous "Purple Cow," lived at 175 Warren Avenue around the turn of the century.

. A number of the prominent Boston businessmen lived in the South End. R. H. Stearns was at 668 Tremont Street, S. S. Pierce was at 5 Union Park, and Henry F. Miller, the piano manufacturer was at 480 Columbus Avenue. At the same time (the 1870's) Dr. Giles Lodge, great-great grandfather of Ex-Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, dwelt in a mansion at 1423 Washington Street.

. In the old days there were many long parades, which started and ended in the South End. The annual Work Horse Parade was a big one. Company vehicles were shined up to their best, with brass name plates. Horses were well groomed, and their drivers in clean uniforms. Then there was a circus parade every year, and the annual Father Matthews Temperance Parade. All of them drew hundreds of people.

. Midway on Washington Street, between West Brookline and West Newton Streets, facing Blackstone Park, there was a horse trough to water horses. And remember the old iron urinal across the street at the park? You could smell it a block away.

. The Dover Street Bridge, leading from Albany Street towards South Boston, was one of the South End's oldest bridges. At one time a Boston Elevated trolley car, with about twenty-five aboard, encountered rail trouble, crashed through the bridge, and plunged into the canal below. All aboard drowned. At the South Boston end of the bridge, the Pullman Car Company had its yard.

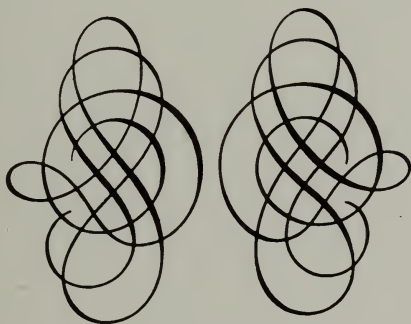
. The Elevated painted their cars in "area colors." The closed cars, which were unheated, had long green upholstered seats opposite each other. On each of the cars were a conductor and an operator. The conductor could ring up a fare to register on a meter at the end of the trolley by pulling a rope. At the operator's location, each trolley carried a bucket of sand, and also a switch stick. The fares were 5¢ with transfer privileges and with children free.

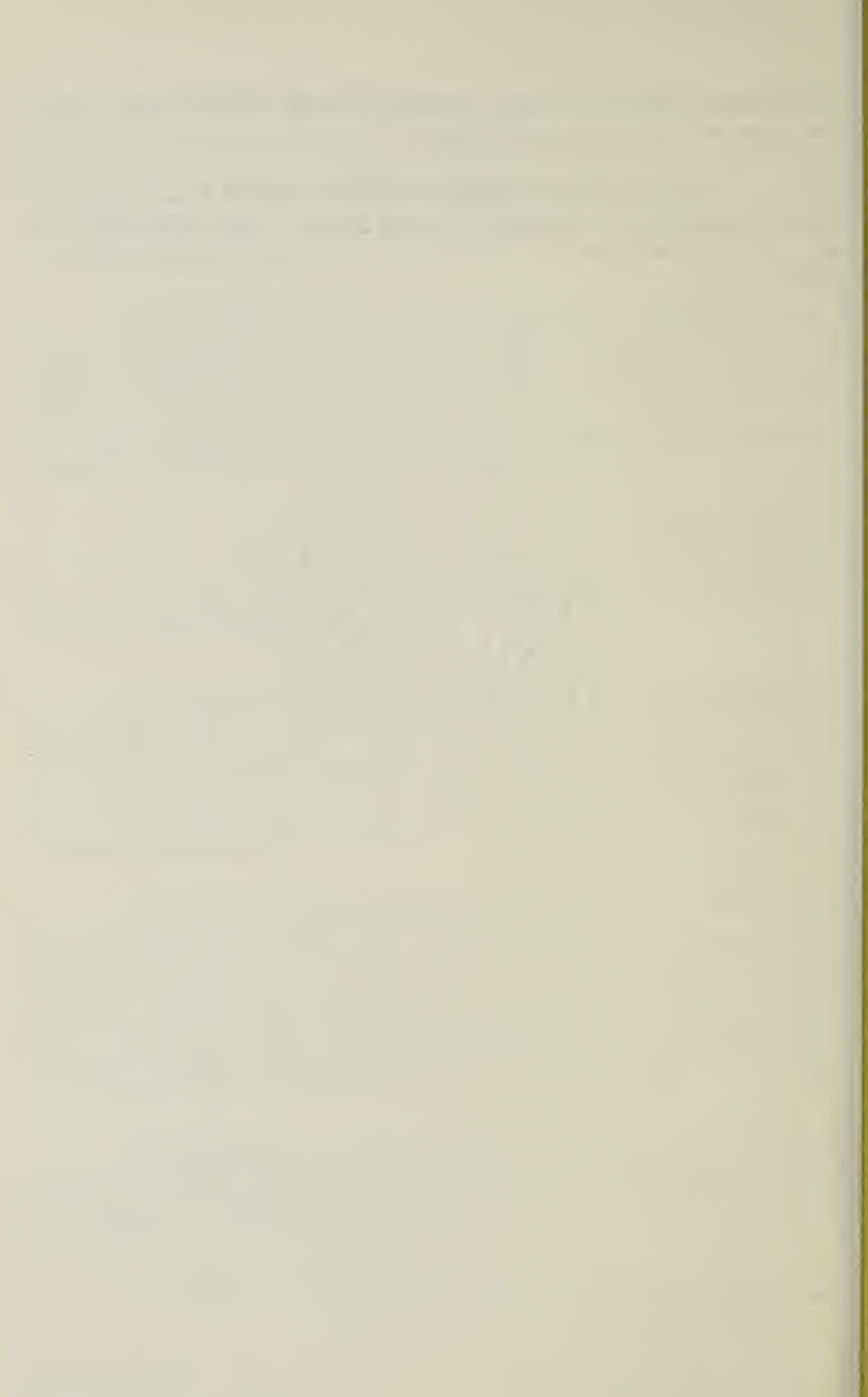
. With living costs at their lowest, I remember when you could even get a meal for as little as three cents at the "Three Penny Lunch," on Washington Street opposite Compton Street - - - Piece of bread one cent, soup one cent, and coffee one cent.

. Theaters couldn't have dancing on the stage on Sundays. They

would just eliminate the dance routines from the Sunday show, though, and open as "sacred concert" shows.

. I wonder how many people remember the old time soap grease man, who came around with a horse and wagon. The people would save all their old grease, and he would cut off a piece of laundry soap in exchange for it.





Interested persons are encouraged to join the South End Historical Society and its activities. For information please contact the treasurer.

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